

Frequently Asked Questions

Amendment 16 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico *December 2014*

What changes to the fishery management plan are proposed in Amendment 16?

- Increase the commercial annual catch limit for royal red shrimp to 337,000 pounds and remove the quota.
- Remove a current in-season accountability measure, while retaining a post-season accountability measure.

Who is proposing changes for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shrimp fishery?

- The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) developed the management measures and proposed them to NOAA Fisheries.
- NOAA Fisheries approves, disapproves, or partially approves the proposals after taking comments from the public.

Why did the Council propose removing the royal red shrimp quota?

- In January 2012, NOAA Fisheries implemented regulations that established a commercial annual catch limit of 334,000 pounds for royal red shrimp.
- However, a quota of 392,000 pounds was already in the regulations and not removed.
- An annual catch limit is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The quota cannot be greater than the annual catch limit, so the Council is proposing to remove the quota.

Why did the Council propose changing the royal red shrimp annual catch limit?

- The Council's Scientific and Statistical committee reviewed royal red shrimp landings and determined the acceptable biological catch should be set at 337,000 pounds.
- The Council increased the annual catch limit to equal the acceptable biological catch.

Why did the Council propose changing the accountability measure for royal red shrimp?

- Regulations currently include an in-season closure for royal red shrimp if the quota is met or projected to be met, based on in-season monitoring.
- In January 2012, NOAA Fisheries implemented regulations that require in-season monitoring and closure only if the annual catch limit was exceeded in the previous year.
- The original measure functionally prevents the measure from the January 2012 rule from ever being triggered.
- The Council chose to retain the in-season monitoring and closure only if the annual catch limit was exceeded in the previous year because commercial landings have not exceeded 337,000 pounds in the past 50 years, and the administrative burden of in-season monitoring was not needed.

How can I comment on the amendment and proposed rule?

- Comments must be submitted by February 25, 2015.
- You may submit comments by either of the following methods. Comments received through other means may not be considered.

- **Electronic Submissions:** Go to www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0030, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- **Mail:** Susan Gerhart, NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.
- Any comments received on the amendment and proposed rule will both be addressed in the final rule, so you need only submit one set of comments.

Where can I find more information on management of the Gulf shrimp fishery?

- For more information, please visit http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/shrimp/index.html.